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OIA-75/79
11 September 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Foreign Assessment Center
SUBJECT : Pay Parking and OIA

1. When you announced a couple of weeks ago the OMB position on Agency pay parking, you asked me to get to you if it created any particular problems for the Office of Imagery Analysis. Not surprisingly, it does, so I am. We have conducted a survey throughout the Office and the reaction is a combination of disappointment, dismay, confusion, and resentment. In sum, the adverse impact on morale is significant.

2. There are two specific aspects of the pay parking system that are of particular concern to our people. First is the perceived inequities of the system being implemented this year at [redacted] but not until next year at Headquarters, and the very large differential in parking charges for [redacted] and Headquarters. And second, in as much as there are no known commercial parking areas within reasonable walking distance to [redacted] what methodology did OMB use to arrive at the rate for [redacted] (Most people believe that anyone remotely interested in making a profit would be out of his mind to open a commercial parking lot in this neighborhood.)

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3. The morale issue is much broader in scope. The vast majority of OIA people have always been unhappy about being separated from Headquarters, both because of the professional difficulties it creates and from the general feeling of being left out and forgotten. This unhappiness has been compounded by having to work in a dirty and unsafe commercial/slum section of Washington. Our people also see themselves--and rightly so in my view--as not enjoying the grade comparability with Headquarters personnel that they deserve. And now, they will be required to pay disproportionately higher rates for the privilege of working in a slum area. It may appear to you that these morale issues are overblown and not well founded; nevertheless, they are real in the minds of our people.

4. In addition to the morale impact, the parking program undoubtedly will have other undesirable consequences. Inevitably, some people will give up their parking space and begin parking out on the street.

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This will not only make neighborhood parking more congested, but raise the risk of incidents as people travel back and forth to their cars. (On 5 September three male [redacted] employees were mugged and robbed at the corner of [redacted]. It also will tend to increase our isolation from Headquarters and reduce our operating flexibility. Many of our people in the past have driven separately so they could work late if required or travel to Headquarters. These people see themselves being forced into joining carpools. I recognize that this is one of the objectives of pay parking but I also realize that it will cause problems when people are needed to work after hours on a particular project--e.g., Cuba--or need to get to Headquarters when the shuttle is either unavailable or inconvenient. On this point, it will therefore be all the more important to ensure that a good shuttle system is operating between [redacted] and other Agency buildings to provide the means for interactions between OIA and other NFAC people.

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5. It seems to me that the institution of the pay parking system creates an important opportunity for you to demonstrate to the people of OIA that you are as concerned about their problems as you are about those of people in Headquarters components. An action on your part that would demonstrate that a senior Agency official, particularly the Director of NFAC, cares more than a fat rat's bottom about what happens to them would do more for the effectiveness of our effort than you can possibly imagine.

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6. The most important step you can take from our point of view would be to recommend to the DCI/DDCI actions designed to eliminate the most inequitable aspects of the system. That is, seek to delay the implementation for [redacted] and other outriders to correspond to the implementation date at Headquarters. And, recommend a plan that would equalize the parking fee for all Agency people, regardless of where they work. This would increase the fee at Headquarters slightly and reduce the fee at other locations drastically. Maybe, we don't stand much chance on these actions, but the most important thing is that you be perceived as having made the attempt. At a minimum, OIA people need to be provided reasonable answers concerning why the system is being implemented here this year and not at Headquarters until next year, and the rationale for the substantial fee differential between Headquarters and here needs to be explained. Other actions that might be considered are asking for an exemption or at least a substantial parking fee reduction to bring the parking costs more in line with the quality of the neighborhood, and requesting an implementation delay until subway service is available to the Building (presently, bus service from outlying areas is inconvenient or non-existent).

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[redacted]
Noel E. Firth.

Director
Imagery Analysis